

# Out of the barn, into the cold

## Dirt Boyz spend December blowing Kunsan snow away

By Airman 1st Class Stephen Collier  
Wolf Pack public affairs

With a record snowfall of 73 inches blanketing Kunsan throughout the month of December, a small band of civil engineers were the lead Airmen to stand between shutting the

base down and keeping it operational.

The Dirt Boyz – the heavy equipment operators of the 8th Civil Engineer Squadron – changed the focus of their mission from repairing runways, street and taxiways to clearing them. They do this through the Snow Barn – the unofficial name of the snow-clearing crews.

"We are charged with clearing all roads on base as well as active runways and taxiways," said Capt. Kurt Muller, 8th CES chief of maintenance engineering. "If it's pavement on the airfield, we remove snow from it so that our airplanes can fly."

The Snow Barn ensures as a first priority the

active runway as well as the parallel taxiway are cleared of all snowfall. Another priority is clearing the way for emergency vehicles to leave the fire department and hospital to respond to incidents on base.

The group is then charged with clearing secondary taxiways and the loop where the aircraft are located.

Lastly, Capt. Muller, also known as the snow control officer, said the group helps to clear the many roads of the base, while facing several challenges throughout December, the most important being the record snowfall.

"The 73 inches of snow is more than we've ever gotten here, and we got it in just 19 days," he pointed out. "With temperatures as cold as they are and getting snow and ice off the road down to bare pavement are probably some of the biggest challenges we have faced."

Because of the record snowfall, the Snow Barn had to call in help from Kunsan's neighbors to the north.

"We just couldn't handle the amount of snow, so members of the 554th Red Horse Squadron at Osan came down and helped us regain control of the snowfall. With their help and expertise in their career field is, we were able to move the snow faster."

Senior Airman Brendan Tape, a heavy equipment operator with the Snow Barn, said the most rewarding part of his job was getting to see the planes take off.

"I choose to do this job because I had some experience before the Air Force using heavy equipment," the Wisconsin native said.

Capt. Muller stressed the importance of the group.

"The Dirt Boyz are some of the hardest working guys on Kunsan Air Base."



Three weeks after record snowfall hit Kunsan, heavy equipment operators continue to remove two to six inches of ice from the roads.

Photo by Capt. Richard Komurek



Photo by Airman 1st Class Stephen Collier

RIGHT: Staff Sgt. Colin Bennett, 8th Civil Engineer Squadron heavy equipment operator, radios in to the Snow Barn for additional support on a taxiway.



The Snow Barn's snow blower clears taxiway Charlie, the main thoroughfare connecting F-16s aircraft shelters with the runway and active taxiways.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stephen Collier

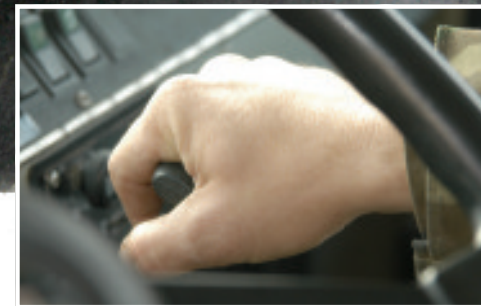


Photo by Airman 1st Class Stephen Collier

Staff Sgt. Colin Bennett, 8th CES, shifts his snow plow into gear before clearing a taxiway.